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House Republicans Call on DOJ Inspector General to Investigate Dismissal of New Black Panther Party Case

Washington, D.C.—House Republicans today sent a letter to Justice Department Inspector General Glenn Fine requesting an investigation into whether improper political considerations led to the Department's dismissal of the New Black Panther Party case. According to the Justice Department's complaint, members of the New Black Panther Party engaged in brazen acts of voter intimidation outside a polling place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on Election Day 2008. The Justice Department won the case against the New Black Panther Party because the defendants failed to respond to the government's allegations.

But rather than obtain a default judgment against the Party to prohibit the defendants from engaging in future voter intimidation tactics, the Justice Department—under the new Democratic leadership—abruptly dropped the case. There were no allegations of prosecutorial misconduct or any changes to the facts underlying the case to justify the dismissal. The Justice Department has refused to respond to Congressional inquiries requesting information regarding the sudden dismissal of the case.

House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Lamar Smith (R-Texas) and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science Ranking Member Frank Wolf (R-Va.) were joined by members of both the Judiciary and Appropriations Committees in requesting the investigation. Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties members who signed the letter include: Ranking Member Jim Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.); Congressman Steve King (R-Iowa); Congressman Trent Franks (R-Ariz.); Congressman Louie Gohmert (R-Texas); and Congressman Jim Jordan (R-Ohio). All Republican members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science joined in signing the letter: Congressman John Culberson (R-Texas); Congressman Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.); and Congressman Jo Bonner (R-Ala.).

A copy of the letter is attached.

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